THE FISH OF AGASSIZ

CREATIVE WRITING

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INCOHERENCE

I was born into a family of urban cannibals. I relish extreme violence and the way the blood splatters on the walls. At night, I walk the streets with a wooden club concealed behind my back and strike the tables at the Capitol wine cellar where the sleeping drunks have lost track of time.

I am incredibly anti-social and quarrelsome, despising people and spitting directly on the faces of those who disagree with me. Unrefined and full of bitterness, I curse like a curmudgeon at those genteel souls who are intellectually and morally superior to me.

As soon as I arrive home, I make my way to the balcony and begin hurling rotten apples and tomatoes at the innocent passers-by below. I flip them

the bird and shout obscenities they cannot comprehend.

But who are you to judge me, you bloody animal? Your bewildered expression stirs my fury and the insatiable urge to slap you across the face. Incandescent with rage, I descend the staircase in the dead of night and smother my neighbours' doors with a mixture of raw eggs, margarine, and cooking oil.

Tomorrow is a significant religious holiday, and the populace flocks to the church to pray and gossip.

What a lovely summer it is!

LETTER TO A FRIEND

My dear friend,

I saw him - he had a bowl of chickpeas in front of him, but what I liked the most was how he slurped his broth. Every night he slept with his head down, hanging from the rafters. He had a golden lighter with dragon fangs on his table. Brake fluid was dripping from his nose and he held an anchor in one hand. The charming philosopher said that hot water had arrived, a bottle of caustic soda was shattered in the bathtub.

Dear friend, you have been accused of being mad, of leaving the people with a noose around their necks, but without soap, of stealing Christmas Day.

You were eating bread with plum jam while he was betrayed for thirty pieces

of silver and over a billion dollars in foreign bank accounts. He was taken from the Garden of Gethsemane by helicopter, then taken by carriage and arrested. You did nothing, you didn't help him, even though you knew he was innocent, he was the only one without sin. He was brought to trial by Pontius Pilate and Pilate of Pont, but he firmly and loudly replied that he would only answer to the Great National Assembly, yet they only spoke empty words.

He was accused of genocide and undermining state power, and was taken on the Via Dolorosa to be crucified. On his left and right, two harlots played strip poker with two thick-tongued circus dwarves, he forgave them all - it was rainy weather. The clogs walked around, slipped on the ground and laughed, the crows

cawed. The firing squad aimed from the hip and shot hastily, after the execution, it snowed poison. Three days after the Scriptures, time stood still. Please swear with your hand glued to the margarine-stained Bible that it's not true!

Do you remember the winter when we used to steal smoked beef from uncle Scrooge's cellar? You sprinkled it generously with aromatic white wine so that we would have a bountiful New Year. We sipped Irish brandy until morning. The next day, we woke up and started all over again. We kept going like this until St. John's Day when we chugged the brandy straight from the barrel. You cracked the whip and blew the horn, we went in a sled pulled by horses. They gave you cakes and nuts, but you wanted money instead.

Wishing you a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

LEILATOUNSIA

I was so exhausted that I couldn't distinguish between dreams and reality. I didn't even know how old I was or what day of the year it was. A cauldron of fragrant fat with the aroma of dahlia poured down like an avalanche. I had taken rum-foam acid and believed I was a houseplant, a flower in the window, a blue anemone.

The previous day, I had an argument with my fiancée, or at least I thought she was my fiancée. In reality, she belonged to someone else. The argument had been nothing but a figment of my imagination. Leilatounsia wasn't my fiancée, and so I didn't argue with her.

When I looked out the window, I saw Leilatounsia naked, resembling one of Rubens' nudes. However, she was only

real to herself, not to me. It all seemed like a bunch of nonsense, like smoking Kent in the dark kitchen. When I looked out the window again, I saw myself as a child in her arms. She rocked me like a mother, let me suckle her breasts and said, "Your life is just another illusion."

The next morning, Leilatounsia prepared scrambled eggs with cheese and seafood for breakfast. I quickly made myself a cup of coffee and got ready for work.

"Good morning, Leilatounsia, my sweet affliction!"

THE STEAM MACHINE

I bought her a French liqueur with flavours of quince and dried pears. I climbed the stairs slowly, with heavy steps, scattering mortar counterclockwise. The soles of my shoes left pale footprints, the girls on the ground floor danced to the rhythm of fado. The white lime peeled off the walls, smelling of moths and fine mouldy cheese.

I entered the room like on other evenings. This time, above her was a contraption with a crank and a piston from which steam was released through the ventilation system. The piston forcefully penetrated her in a wild, African rhythm. The bed shook rhythmically, the springs creaked under the metal press. The girl emitted frenzied sounds, as in a prolonged

ecstasy. Suddenly, jets of heated oil sprouted from the piston and splashed the walls in all directions.

Hypnotized by the unexpected and perfect spectacle, I dropped the bottle of liqueur on the floor. The liqueur decolorized the parquet and spread the diffuse scent of pears in the room. Her roommates looked at me with sad eyes, from which tears of mourning flowed, and their cheeks were shadowed with black onion peel. I rushed to their feet to slurp them up eagerly. The tears left dark and sandy traces on their delicate ankles.

On the windowsill sat a blue ceramic vase with dragons from the Ming Dynasty. Have you heard that, boy? From the Ming Dynasty!

At the Train Station

Grandma used to say that birds fall from the sky at the station. The old building that had housed the ticket office and waiting room remained in ruins after the station was abandoned and the employees were laid off. In a short time, it was taken apart piece by piece by the people from the village. Only the crumbling walls remained, painted in candyfloss pink, peeling and dusty, along with the roof tiles riddled with holes. Street artists had drawn abstract motifs, the hammer and sickle, the dick, and "I Love Lily" with a red heart on the walls.

The three-legged devil, with horns and a goat's beard, embraced a gigantic clock made of charred wood with traditional decorations and eagerly bit into it as if it were a gingerbread wheel.

White trains with diagonal multi-coloured stripes hurriedly passed by every morning without stopping on their swift journey to Siberia. The passengers looked at it with sympathy and waved, and the devil suddenly extended his hairy hand with three fingers, long and sharp claws, towards them, as if he wanted to snatch them. The children clapped and waved frantically with red flags featuring the sickle and hammer.

I had an old Russian fur coat with lapels. I descended the subway passage that went beneath the tracks. It was a harsh winter, a blizzard; the cold caressed your face. Only two trains arrived at the station; I didn't have the money to go to the tropics. An old man was waiting on the platform, with wooden suitcases and worn-out

clothes, a crow perched on his shoulder.

The subway passage was damp and deserted, with out-of-order telephone numbers scribbled on the walls. I headed towards Platform V. In the distance, the steam locomotives whistled. On the other side, on Platform I, the hunched silhouette of the old man sitting on a wooden suitcase amazed me. As far back as I could remember, only the prostitutes waited for the Tropicana station.

My train arrived first. At Ulan Bator, I showed my ticket to the conductor waiting at the carriage entrance. The compartment smelled of boot polish and acid. In one corner, an empty bottle of Active Sport Drink - cool off and quench your thirst.

I took out my newspaper and went straight to the classifieds section. The train on Platform I departed first, but the old man hadn't boarded; he remained petrified on the suitcase. Lime trickled from his nose and ears, and several crows had gathered in a circle around him. The station master was a square-faced dwarf. He raised the flag, a sign that we could depart. Looking out of the window, I saw the old man disintegrating into white chalk dust.

There was still a long way to go to Ulan Bator. Along the journey, parts of the train began to detach.

The Rolling Stock Processing Enterprise

They were skilled artisans, they were. Henry Coalman, for instance, was so adept that he could merely glance at a carriage and exclaim, "It's fixed!" and the work would already be done. But once they put it back on the tracks, it fell apart into thousands of pieces.

Back then, it held prestige. When you met a lass and handed her a note with your telephone number, signed below as "Ethan Railford, engineer at the Rolling Stock Processing Enterprise," she would be so impressed that she might have wanted to bear your children right there and then.

You'd see thousands of workers gathered at its gate, entering their shift with revolutionary devotion and leaving

with their pockets brimming with parts. The walkway quivered under their determined steps. When you gazed upon them, your heart would swell with pride and hope for the bright future that awaited you. Their faces, adorned with a red cap on their foreheads, had been portrayed in hundreds of paintings and thousands of poems.

Now, everything was in ruins. The rusted and wide-open gates paved the way to a valley of lamentation. The long, empty halls with their leaky roofs resembled beasts of the abyss, their hearts severed, stranded on barren grounds. Weeds, grown shoulder-high, advanced chaotically, starting from the main gate and stretching through the abandoned gardens, covering the paths, stifling the overturned and rust-eaten Mack trucks. It was there that the destitute vagabonds of capitalism found

their refuge, their minds drowned in alcohol, their faces worn out, their gazes icy, baring resentment and bitterness.

I ascended the deserted metal bridge, leading from nowhere to nowhere. The broken and rusted railings offered no promise of support in times of peril. I brought along my foldable wooden chair, crafted long ago in the carpentry section of the enterprise. I took out my gas mask, a boiled egg, a packet of honey biscuits from Royal Dansk, and a bottle of sulphurous yellow water. I sat on a chair and began smoking from a pack of Chesterfield. Thoughts and colours passed before me like migrating birds.

I glanced downwards and saw him approaching slowly, preparing to pass beneath the walkway. He walked dejectedly, hunched over, with his head

uncovered, revealing a shiny bald pate like an ostrich egg. He was the perfect target. I waited for him to be at the right distance, then stood up and spat directly on his head, swiftly followed by hurling the water bottle against a rock, shattering it into hundreds of shards.

Before he could recover, raise his gaze, and utter "Bloody hell!", I had already fled along the iron railings, my soul seemingly liberated from all the sins of youth. I laughed incessantly, sprinting madly towards the open gates like a warm embrace of the Rolling Stock Processing Enterprise.

He understood it all, knew the essence of things down to the tiniest details. He had white hair, a yellow moustache like a wheat ear, welder's goggles, carried two 60 thou spanner under his arm, and was dressed in a plumber's overalls and rubber boots. At the

grocery store, he bought cigarettes, a can of tripe soup, a clove of garlic, pâté, and two two-litre bottles of beer.

When he reached the cashier's desk, his eyes widened like two blazing flames. He began to sputter like an electrical installation in a state of disrepair, stuck out his tongue like a snake with bells and spewed venom in all directions. They were so frightened that they let him leave without paying for the items.

As he exited the shop, he climbed aboard a colossal freight train stationed at the entrance. The railway tracks scarred the city streets like black scars on an innocent person's face. The locomotive emitted harsh, thick smoke that stained the laundry hanging on wires, turning it black.

The engineer was dressed in a pharaoh's costume, had silver charms representing the demons of the abyss on each finger, teeth made of tinplate, smoked cigars, and sang arias from Parsifal. Two dark-skinned cyclopes shovelled coal into the heated engine.

They were employees of the Rolling Stock Processing Enterprise. They had been sent to build a better world. If you dared to stand in their way, they'd clear you with a chainsaw. When they struck with their crowbars, they felt no remorse. They had Nusfad Erectus's face tattooed on their chests and the metaphysical wolf on their legs.

As they entered the station, the fish of AgassiZ opened its large mouth like an impenetrable abyss, and the silence of darkness could leave you deaf. It had sharp, straight teeth, its head sculpted in prehistoric times towering above

everyone, guiding their destiny. If you had understood its significance, you would have turned to dust and powder, dispersing into eternity.

THE SABRE-TOOTHED TIGER

He had blue blood coloured with Dye Fusion paint. On Saturday morning, he rose from the swamp, started the stopwatch, boiled a Dodo bird egg for two minutes, put on his tie and bowtie. He proceeded down Harmony Lane, among the tramway lines. At the station, he saw a woman with blonde curls wearing a red cloak. Red represents the blood spilled by the heroes of the nation.

He enjoyed wandering through antique shops with a package under his arm, searching for stamps, folders, collecting cigarette butts from the ground. In the package, he had rum-infused chocolate candies soaked with poison. He would deliver them to the infamous one.

He entered a gallery-bookstore. There was an art exhibition and book launch, a new volume of Nusfad Erectus. He enjoyed book launches, so he stayed to listen. A rotund man, small in stature, with a monocle and a goatee, dressed in a gala suit with a straw hat, gave a speech. He wore a yellow carnation on his lapel. Yellow represents the abundant wheat fields threshed and harvested throughout our homeland.

The man in the centre of the room said, "The heavy arm of history strikes again with relentless force. Many have fallen. They were placed in coffins and submerged in glasses of water. The slumbering ones are always praised with odes of glory. Faces as white as lime smeared with lipstick utter emphatic phrases that I do not understand. They are there for decoration, devoid of judgment, staring

into space, the flow of time turning the sand in the hourglass, lizards hastily dive into the cave's hole. Curved marble walls have been built around them. Above, the sun shines with cold neon light. A cellist dressed in a cashmere cape changes the chords between finite and infinite. The white bull gazes from the mountain. It snows with volcanic snow."

The audience applauded and requested autographs.

He grabbed a French croissant with Belgian chocolate before continuing his journey. He entered the working-class neighbourhood. The grey buildings were covered with political posters. He climbed up to the fourth floor and rang the doorbell. The infamous one opened the door. She had long wavy hair and blue eyes. Blue represents the clear sky of our homeland, confidently

observed by the working people who triumphantly advance towards communism. He greeted her, said "Hello!" and wished her a happy birthday, extending the candies to her. She thanked him and invited him inside, but he politely declined. He hurriedly descended the stairs with his hands in his pockets. He went to the newsstand to buy roasted seeds and The Morning Herald newspaper.

"Somewhere in a valley, the sabre-toothed tiger must be hiding," he told the vendor. He looked at his watch. It didn't take long before the sound of the ambulance siren was heard.

THE SEASON OF PREDATORS

He was of unbounded sadness. Thick drops of coal tar oozed from his eyes. Despair had no name. On the wall, his gaze was fixed on the portrait of the infamous one. The woman had a remarkable beauty, yet her malevolent actions called for retribution.

He peered through the glass in the wall. Hanging in the air were dreams, dried and blackened by the unyielding sun that shone over the graves, their tails entwined with stone vipers. A black widow played her violin and swung on a pulley.

His heart boiled with fury. He drew out his hunting knife and stabbed it into a slice of bread. He seized the infamous portrait and trampled it, smashed it with

his sledgehammer, then vacuumed up the shards of glass. He couldn't fathom what tomorrow would hold.

He held all the perfumed letters in his hands, reliving colourful memories. He could sense the deep love of the rocks under his feet and the murmuring of the old cod devoured by the axe. He clenched his teeth and tossed letter after letter into the fire.

All he could think about was revenge. He would execute them without pity; blood would gush from their heads like from a flowing well. He took the axe and sharpened its blade on the grinder, producing sparks that flew in all directions. The point could bisect a strand of hair into four, like a samurai sword. He spat out viper's blood into a mug.

He opened the door. The noxious greenhouse gas invaded his lungs. The streets were overrun by orangutans, struggling and fumbling in vain. People donned gas masks, and pterodactyls and blue zeppelins drifted in the sky. Hydrogen sulphide leaked from sewer holes and pungent smoke billowed from windows. The season of predatory fish had begun.

May God have mercy on us.

MALCOLM THE GREAT

He had an aged body, but an iron arm. He struggled to sit on the chair at the head of the table. Above the throne hung the royal coat of arms, depicting a red lion with a blue tongue, ready to attack, breathing flames from its nostrils and surrounded by a border of fleurs-de-lis.

He was always amazed at how much smarter he was compared to those around him. He looked at them with disdain and pity, their hideous figures always furrowing his brow whenever he glanced at them. He requested his snuffbox and a bowl of vinegar to soak his toes. A dwarf with bulging eyes and a red carnival hat hurriedly came to fulfil his command.

He loved music. He had an orchestra composed of four elderly fiddlers with

golden teeth: one played the lute, one played a clarsach with a single string, one played the accordion, and the last one blew into a bagpipe. He always made them play during gatherings with the nobles to drown out their muffled voices when they came with all sorts of complaints and grievances that bored him to no end.

At feasts, he demanded roast wild ram prepared on the grill, brought all the way from the Black Forest Mountains, after which he drank pear brandy from a clay jug until the next morning. At the end of the party, he spat out a gold coin depicting his illustrious face to be thrown to the poor who waited at the city gates.

He was the most adored monarch in history.

PHILIP THE MAD

Above him, there was the monster's head with three hundred sixty-five chimeras in a glass filled with wind and turmoil.

His pale cheek fell onto the millstone like a banner from the time of ancestors. When he rose on stilts, his hat with a pointed tip reached the sky's limit. Having learned during years of in-depth studies in the cathedral's spires or in the labyrinths of the Library of Alexandria, he knew that the most important thing in the world was to rotate the wrists of his hands counterclockwise.

During summer, he heated up so intensely that all his clothes caught fire. When preparing for battle, he advanced ahead of all his soldiers like a blazing fire. He spent his hours of rest covering

his head with peat mud or swimming in the marsh where he had sacrificed the hearts of his enemies. In the last month of the year, he disappeared completely, as if swallowed by the depths of hell. He walked upon a man, one eye, towards the sacred place, a tree, momentum, a gentle scream in the field, wild horses gnawed a rope tied to the ground.

Drought and the rain of cubic stones soaked the land, resembling the blazon of a long-lost dynasty. If the black tear of despair flowed from your cheese tart, you would light the candle for the dark future of the medieval city. If you were a king, your successors eager for glory would quarter you to pieces.

On the morning they learned he had lost the war, a venomous arrow forcefully pierced through the iron-barred window of the prayer chamber,

piercing his demonic eye and exiting through the back of his head. The church bells chimed long until noon. No one had any regrets.

"The king is dead! Long live the king!"

THE TWO BROTHERS

Many years passed during which I did not know who they were. They lived on the other side of the city, on the other side of the country, at the opposite end of the world - Milkins and Perry, two anonymous individuals among billions of insignificant people of their time. Passing by them on the tram, I could have easily ignored them, dissipating into the crowd like ether, among scarves and beanies. But how could I have lived all this time in the cruellest and most indifferent ignorance? Amazement follows me like a shadow in a continuous parade among the streetlights. Only after I met them did I begin to appreciate them fully. It was that moment of revelation after returning from the wilderness.

Each one wears a bronze cross around their necks, engraved with their own name and that of Christ. Perry has a deep and branching scar on his cheek, like the traces left in a mirror by a stone strike. He wears a dagger at his waist, a black bracelet with studs, a chain around his neck, and hunting boots. Milkins is smaller in stature, but more wiry. He looks at you askance if he doesn't like your face, smokes Three Castles, crushes chestnuts under his feet, and at night he pulls a black sock over his face.

They are always together, working as a team. They pounce on people and bite them on the ankle like rabid wolves, sneak up behind them and plunge a knife into their jugular vein. They watch as the blood spurts out like from an artesian well, stick their tongue out and blow out the flame of a candle into their

nostrils. They set traps, catch latecomers off guard when the fog is thicker, trip them up, climb on top of them and split them open with a knife, gouge out their eyes, and crack their heads with a club. They writhe around them like the demons of dispersion.

On Sundays and holidays, they dress in white sailor suits as if for a parade. They sit at your table, before the cutlery is brought out, they stand up and say the Lord's Prayer, chew meditatively and calmly, crack their bones between their teeth, spit an olive back into the plate, and apologize. They are very educated and well-mannered. When they meet a mother with a child, they take off their hats, smile politely, stroke the child's head and say, "Look at this beautiful child, be granted a long and peaceful life!"

They were extraordinary people, may God keep them in His care!

THE SON OF HER BROTHER

She was most fond of the son of her brother. He was vengeful, had stony eyes, wore a white coat, walked through mud, wasn't afraid of the night. He had a double-edged axe that he kept permanently on his back. When he got angry, he struck the maple table in front of the guests with fury, shattered bones, cut off heads without judgment, and screams were heard.

He travelled often, slept hidden in stables, abducted young women whom he hid in a cave. He had hair as black as a raven's feather, ate bacon with onions, sipped blood from a cup of wine, dreamed of being king or emperor over a prosperous country.

Time swallowed up the years one after another. He was left with only one eye, having lost the other in a crusade. He hypnotized you with his harsh gaze, then devoured you alive. His teeth were like knives. You couldn't stand up to him, he never lost a fight. The defeated one was always beheaded, and his body hung by one leg in front of a cliff. On nights with a red crescent moon, he walked the deserted streets with an axe in his hand. If he caught someone lost, coming out of some notorious inn, he split them in half without hesitation, with a single blow. In the morning, crows would take his body and throw it to the wolves.

One day in midwinter, they found him petrified in the church tower. Milk and blood flowed from his mouth, he had a horseshoe in his forehead, his face was covered in hail, and his eye had turned

into shards of glass. She mourned him deeply. You won't find people like him anymore.

THE MASTER

Most of the time, he would let them train on their own. The Master would only come once a month, sometimes even less frequently. When he did come, he sang wild, orgiastic, repetitive songs, while the others accompanied him with drums. Then he made them dance, prance like monkeys, applaud him, admire him. He continued with tree-like movements, spun like serpents, and made panther-like sounds. His hair was white, and his tongue was long, split in two like a viper's. During the philosophy circle, he emphasized how important it was to know how to eat a girl out, advising everyone to split their tongues like his.

They climbed ropes as if scaling Chomolungma, the red sand flowed on granite in continuous, fine streams. He

swallowed ripe wheat with the power of a thresher. His movements became increasingly fluid, like water, so fast that he sometimes disappeared from the disciples' sight. His legs had such strength that he broke through reinforced concrete walls, turning them into shards and fragments of glass. At the end of the contemplation session, he focused so intensely that he triggered the orgasm of all the women in the room simultaneously, and then he began to levitate. They looked up at his body freed from matter, emitting the colours of the rainbow. Water flowed from the walls, and through the windows, infinity could be glimpsed.

If you fell asleep at that moment, you would have been transported to another universe from which you could never return. This was his power, derived from thousands of years of

practice and meditation. His disciples inhaled ethyl alcohol through their noses and transformed into fiery dragons with long ivory fangs and wide nostrils from which they blew lava and sea foam. When he woke up again to reality, he sat in front of a table lined with fresh homemade bagels, sheepskin-bagged cheese and ginger-flavoured mulled wine, along with meringues and marshmallows. An old man stood on the table, spinning with his arms outstretched like a spinning top. Through the wide-open doors, a flock of sheep entered amidst the applause of the people in the dining hall.

The Master was wearing a tank top with the face of Nusfad Erectus; he smoked the peace pipe while slowly dissolving into a glass hanging from a cord, inside of which floated slices of green lemon,

mulberry leaves, and mint. Next to it, arranged asymmetrically, were a foie gras pâté, a can of carp in tomato sauce, pickled cucumbers, smoky vegetable salsa, eggplant salad, and a yellow watermelon. At the neighbourhood grocery store, the can cost four pounds and twenty-three pence, and the saleswoman was a blonde with permed hair, false eyelashes, nails painted cinnabar red, and large juicy breasts.

What a gorgeous saleswoman she was!

THE FISH OF AGASSIZ

It was a dark and stormy night. A sharp steel spike had penetrated the window, creeping its way into the apartment like a metal tentacle. The national Golden Crimson Festival, showcasing the award winners, was playing on an old TV set. Tears streamed down my face like blood from a martyr.

On the table lay an open pack of Kents, while the sounds of drills and music blared from the adjacent apartment. Time dripped down the walls like green, gooey paint. In the centre of the room, a large glass tank in the shape of an ostrich egg levitated, holding the preserved fish of AgassiZ in a translucent and viscous solution. Suddenly, the doorbell rang and in walked The Hotstepper.

I reached into the drawer and grabbed a sledgehammer, contemplating smashing the aquarium. As midnight approached, the bats emerged from their roosts. With a mighty and precise blow, I cracked the glass wall, causing the liquid to spill out and flood the neighbours downstairs. The sudden moisture caused the TV lights to flicker one by one.

Outside, the sound of metallic laughter filled the air. The fish continued to float in the centre of the room. The Hotstepper pulled out a pocket knife to slice open its belly, revealing a blue woman of extraordinary beauty with ankle-length hair and long, slender fingers like branches of a young tree.

We both sat down on the floor to get a better view of her breasts. The Hotstepper lit up a red Marlboro.

THE ART OF SURVIVAL

I knew them all, they were dear to me like childhood heroes. They wore white ties, tin buttons, monocles and moustaches, patent leather shoes, screws in the breast pocket. They walked in large groups of hundreds, perhaps even thousands of people. They preferred grandiose demonstrations, military parades, fanfares, popular gatherings, emphatic speeches, crowds, screams, and yells.

They were always together, in good times and in bad, they stepped on each other's toes, made a lot of noise for nothing, licked stamps with their tongues, and when they had to solve cryptic conundrums from the Math Horizons, they copied from one another. They snorted chalk dust and sneezed in front of each other.

When they marched forward on the bridge, they stomped rhythmically in a parade step, the bridge began to tremble and shake in all directions, cracked in half, and threw them all into the swirling water. Falling into the swift waves, they struggled like prisoners caught in chains, screaming, kicking each other, grabbing each other's ties and socks, pulling each other into the depths, swallowing water with scales and milk over eggs, grabbing branches and roots, and sticking their hands in the sand.

After surfacing, they dried themselves on a wire like a pile of clothes, enjoyed the sun's rays and the breeze, played the bagpipe and the horn, waved like the flags, and remembered the glory of their homeland.